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Carlson resigns as Ely police officer

City's employee committee recommends denial, urges termination instead

Posted Wednesday, February 1, 2017 4:15 pm

Keith Vandervort

ELY - Ely police officer Jason Carlson, who avoided jail time after striking a plea agreement in court and admitting to an illegal sexual relationship with an underage girl, submitted his resignation to the city officials last week.

The city's employee relations committee recommended that the City Council deny the request. The Council will discuss and could take action on the issue at their next meeting on Feb. 7.

Carlson, an 11-year veteran of the city's police force, was on paid administrative leave with the city from April 2015 until he has placed on unpaid leave two weeks ago. During that 21-month stretch he was paid \$27.81 an hour (40 hours per week).

According to Clerk-Treasurer Harold Langowski, if the City Council accepted Carlson's resignation, rather than proceed with an investigation and possible termination action, Carlson could also collect the monetary equivalent of 720 hours of sick time accrued while he was on

paid administrative leave.

"The employee relations committee met last week and agreed to recommend to the council to deny the resignation request at this time and have the city attorney proceed with the investigation into a possible termination procedure," Langowski said. "The city attorney is continuing talks with Carlson's union representative."

Just before the start of the Jan. 17 jury trial Carlson pleaded guilty to misconduct by a public official, a gross misdemeanor. A felony third-degree sexual conduct charge was dismissed. Later that day, council members placed Carlson on unpaid leave, the initial step in a process that could lead to the termination of his employment.

A Feb. 24 sentencing date is scheduled in St. Louis Circuit Court for Carlson on the misconduct charge. Under state law he could be subject to one year imprisonment or a fine of \$3,000. Terms of the plea agreement appear to call for no jail time, with probation and possible fines.

The criminal case against Carlson, 38, who now lives in Aurora, stems from an investigation initiated in the spring of 2015. He was placed on paid leave shortly after the allegations surfaced, and refused requests by the city that he resign.

The police department has been operating without a full complement of seven officers for almost two years.

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